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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

TITLE: STETHOSCOPE CLEANSING UNIT AND BUSINESS
METHOD FOR PROVIDING ADVERTISING THROUGH
THE USE OF STETHOSCOPE CLEANSING UNIT
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STETHOSCOPE.PATENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of The Invention

The present invention relates to the field of medical instrument care and business methods in medical advertising and sales.

2. Background Information

We have a near epidemic of hospital-borne opportunistic infections that are transmitted primarily to the very young, the very old, and the very weak. These three populations are in the majority in every hospital population around the country. What can be done to prevent the spread of these infections? Proper aseptic technique, simple procedures such as frequent hand-washing, and proper cleansing of medical equipment can all be used to help prevent the spread of infections such as Nosocomial Pneumonia, one common bacterial infection that is spread in hospitals. Such drastic measures as "single use medical devices" have been proposed to help solve this problem. The solution we propose today is much cheaper, much simpler, and much more practical.

The stethoscope is a piece of medical equipment that no doctor can be without. The typical doctor uses a stethoscope dozens of times a day. And yet, less than 2% of the estimated 30 million stethoscopes in use today are cleaned between patient assessments. That part of the stethoscope that comes in contact with the patient is called the diaphragm and it can harbor untold numbers of germs. If doctors and nurses were given a simple, quick,

1 convenient way to sterilize their stethoscope diaphragms they would be much more likely to
2 perform this simple, yet effective task. Currently, they must hunt down a bottle of alcohol
3 and a cotton ball, saturate the cotton ball with alcohol, and then disinfect their stethoscope
4 diaphragm. Or, they must find an individual alcohol packet, tear it open, sterilize their
5 stethoscope, and then discard the trash.

6 With today's invention it takes one second and a quick swipe to sterilize the one piece
7 of medical equipment that virtually every patient comes in contact with--the stethoscope. By
8 quickly inserting the stethoscope diaphragm into the stethoscope cleansing unit and then
9 removing, medical personnel can ensure a clean, sterile surface with which to examine their
10 next patient.

11 One of the main challenges in advertising to the medical community is providing
12 advertising that will actually make an impression on a busy doctor or nurse. Combine a
13 method that will make an impression with a method that will actually be of great use to
14 members of the medical community and their patients, and you would have an unbeatable
15 combination. The present invention is just such a method.

16 The method of advertising proposed by the present business method takes the
17 common practice of "give-aways" to a new and practical height. Typically, doctors and
18 nurses are given pencils, pads, combs, fingernail files, key holders, demonstration tools, or
19 any number of small gifts that are emblazoned with a marketer's logo and are meant to keep
20 the advertising company's name in mind. These items end up at home, in the car, with the
21 spouse or children, stuck in a drawer, or in the trash. With today's advertising method, the

1 proposed give-away is something useful, practical, and is meant to be kept in every
2 examining room, right beside the ever-present box of disposable gloves. These give-aways
3 are stethoscope cleansing units that are compact and effective. In only one second, the doctor
4 or nurse can disinfect her stethoscope diaphragm and move on to the next patient. All the
5 while being subtly influenced by the message on the stethoscope cleansing unit itself.

6 Further, while its presence in the examining room makes the stethoscope cleansing
7 unit convenient for medical personnel to use, and therefore an ideal location for medical
8 products advertising, the fact that the patient is typically kept waiting in examining rooms
9 makes all objects found in that room "prime real estate" for any marketer's advertisement.
10 Who hasn't spent many minutes, or even hours, waiting in an examining room for the doctor?
11 The time is usually spent gazing about the room looking for something interesting to see or
12 read. That is exactly why medical examining rooms always have public service posters in
13 them. Where else can be found such a captive audience for a poster on the heartbreak of
14 fungal toe infections? The presence of any retail marketer's advertisement on a stethoscope
15 cleansing unit, placed conveniently beside the disposable gloves, will be seen and read by
16 virtually all patients who find themselves waiting in that examining room. This novel
17 business method of advertising has a captive, and therefore attentive, audience.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of the foregoing, it is an object of the present invention to provide a useful apparatus for preventing the spread of disease in a medical setting.

It is another object of the present invention to benefit medical personnel and patients by giving the medical personnel an easy, fast, convenient way to sterilize stethoscope diaphragms between patient assessments.

It is a further object of the present invention to have a stethoscope cleansing unit available in each examining room with the medical personnel and patient so that medical personnel will be reminded and motivated to cleanse their stethoscopes between patient assessments.

In view of the foregoing, it is another object of the present invention to provide a novel business method which benefits retail marketers, medical personnel, and patients.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a novel business method for promoting and selling many different types of medical products to the medical community. Also, it is an object of the present invention to provide a novel business method for promoting and selling many different types of products to medical patients.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a novel business method for promoting and selling many different types of products to the medical community and patients by providing an easy, quick way for medical personnel to sterilize their stethoscope diaphragms, while at the same time advertising a marketer's logo right inside the examining room.

1 In satisfaction of these and other related objectives, Applicant's present invention
2 provides for a way to advertise to medical personnel and patients, inside the hospital or
3 examining room, while also providing a highly practical, effective, and useful way to help
4 prevent the spread of infectious diseases among personnel and patients. The use of small,
5 easily used, stethoscope cleansing units to advertise medical products and services will
6 enable the marketer to keep his logo in front of medical personnel at a time in which the use
7 of such products and services would most be at issue: during patient examinations. In
8 addition, the use of these small, easily used stethoscope cleansing units to advertise other
9 retail products and services will enable the marketer to keep his logo in front of patients at
10 a time in which they would be most likely to have the time to read such advertisements:
11 during lengthy waiting periods in the exam room.

12
13 Applicant's approach to the problem described above is certainly simple, but it is
14 equally unobvious. Applicant's apparatus and novel business method facilitate for the first
15 time a solution to the problem of how to quickly and easily sterilize a stethoscope diaphragm,
16 while at the same time keeping a marketer's logo in front of potential costumers at the precise
17 time that they would be most likely to appreciate the marketer's goods or services, thereby
18 encouraging them to choose marketer's product.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a stethoscope cleansing unit of the present invention with its lid member open

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a stethoscope cleansing unit of the present invention with its lid member shut.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference to Figures 1 and 2, the stethoscope cleansing unit of the present invention is identified generally by the reference number 10.

Cleansing unit 10 includes a holding chamber 12, which in the preferred embodiment would hold 2-3 ounces of isopropyl alcohol, or other antiseptic liquid (not shown in the figures) such as is commonly known in the medical field. Chamber lid member 14 can open and close on hinges such as are conventionally used (not shown in figures) or can simply fit snugly on top of holding chamber 12. Wicking member 16 would be a sponge in the preferred embodiment, but could be some other similar absorbant material. Distal end 18 absorbs the antiseptic liquid found in holding chamber 12 and this end would most likely reach to the bottom of holding chamber 12 (not shown in figures).

In the preferred embodiment, the doctor or nurse would slip his stethoscope (not shown) under the stethoscope-receiving member 22, making contact between the diaphragm of the stethoscope and proximal end 20 of the wicking member 16. This allows the

1 diaphragm (not shown in the figures) to come into contact with the antiseptic liquid found
2 in holding chamber 12, which has wicked up wicking member 16.

3 One aspect of the present invention is its use in promoting retail product selection.
4 In this novel business method, businesses that market to the medical community, or other
5 businesses, would have their logo or other advertisement embossed, or otherwise attached
6 to the outside surface 24 of holding chamber 12. Various designs, colors, or patterns could
7 be used to further enhance the appearance of the stethoscope cleansing unit. Medical
8 practitioners would be encouraged to position the stethoscope cleansing unit in the
9 examining room, right beside the disposable examining gloves, making usage convenient and
10 exposure of medical personnel and patients to the advertisement constant.

11
12 Although the invention has been described with reference to specific embodiments,
13 this description is not meant to be construed in a limited sense. Various modifications of the
14 disclosed embodiments, as well as alternative embodiments of the inventions will become
15 apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reference to the description of the invention. It
16 is, therefore, contemplated that the appended claims will cover such modifications that fall
17 within the scope of the invention.